



Most of the remaining contents are self-explanatory, except for the whistle. I have heard tales of riders who fell out of view of passers-by and were unable to move. The whistle might summon help in such a situation (try blowing an SOS). The camera, like the other items listed in parentheses on the next page, may not be useful to all riders. On days when rain is looming, the fanny pack goes into a saddlebag or backpack with rain gear.

## The Tailbag



*With careful packing, you can get virtually anything you need for roadside repair, basic first-aid, and other other motorcycling adventures in a full-size tail bag like the Wolfman item.*

Once I travel beyond the greater L.A. area, I throw the Magic Bag onto the back of whatever I'm riding. Its contents are intended to help me deal with routine and emergency problems that arise on longer treks. The beauty of having all this stuff in one bag is that I'm always ready for a long ride. If someone calls and suggests a cruise up the coast, I'm already packed. For rides that will last several days, all I need to add is sufficient clothing. The contents are chosen to work with a variety of bikes, with both metric and American tools and fasteners. Although it's tempting to tailor the contents just for the bike(s) I'll be riding, there is always the chance I will come across a broken bike of the other persuasion.

I normally use a [Wolfman](#) (303/ 541-9723) tailbag, chosen for its several accessible pockets and convenient size -- big enough for everything but not too bulky. The same stuff will also fit into most saddlebags or tankbags, but a tailbag is the best choice for me because I can quickly mount it on a variety of stock motorcycles. As much as practical, the contents are divided into subcontainers (like the envelope-style bags from [Aerostich](#), 800/222-1994). My loose tools snuggle in a tool roll from [RevPack](#) (800/ 766-2461).

Topping my list of contents are spare face shields -- one clear, one tinted. I store them in a pair of heavy socks, one per sock. This protects the shields and provides a source of added warmth for my feet. Protect All or Pledge can clean windshields, face shields or the bike itself. I normally carry a single bottle of water in case I get stranded. But if I venture into the desert I take two or three more, usually freezing them the night before.

My small first-aid kit is equipped to treat abrasions, bleeding and insect stings. It includes more hand-cleaning wipes, rubber gloves (2 sets), a selection of small and large bandages, moist burn pads, tape, and non-aspirin pain reliever. A small bottle of hydrogen peroxide can clean up scrapes with the aid of a surgical scrub sponge, and there are small packets of antibiotic ointment to apply under bandages. My pocketknife also has tweezers. I started carrying a bicycle strobe light after being stranded at night in the rain on an interstate highway divider. This small, flashing red light uses that same AA battery and clips to my helmet, jacket or seat. Its rapid flashing is eye-catching. The possible danger is some drowsy or drunk driver will steer toward it, but I think it serves as a warning signal for the overwhelming majority.

My tool kit must serve a variety of bikes, since what I ride changes from day to day. Yours will probably be more compact if you are building it for a single bike. However, if you frequently ride in a group, having a universal kit can reduce everyone's load. The ratchet and socket seem essential for most bikes, because even if they have a tool kit, many parts are difficult to remove with just a wrench. Include a spark-plug socket as well, I usually carry both U.S. and metric sizes. Make sure you have the tools needed to adjust or remove accessory pieces which may not be compatible with your tool kit.

The crescent wrench should fit the largest hex on your bike (usually an axle nut) and can also serve as a makeshift hammer or lever for bending a fallen-upon piece. The small locking pliers provide an extra hand when removing a fastener, fill-in for a broken shift lever, or clamp something that's trying to escape. Those adjustable box wrenches turn any nut or bolt I don't have a wrench for. A tube of citrus-based hand cleaner from Finish Line (516/666-7300) makes post-fix cleanup easy and quick.

I recommend the tire-repair kits from [Stop & Go](#) (800/747-0238). The firm has kits for tubeless and tube-type tires. I carry both, along with tire irons and a container of sealant for tube-type tires. As we have discussed in previous issues, sealants should be avoided (if possible), since they can cause the layers of your tire to separate. Tire companies recommend prompt replacement if you use this stuff. Finally, have a method of inflating tires. I carry mini CO2 cartridges and a compression-actuated pump that goes into the spark-plug hole -- both from Stop & Go.

I have a set of [Road Gear](#) jumper cables or you can make a set of your own with four-gauge (or heavier) wire. A hammer driver is only worthwhile if your bike uses Phillips screws in the cases, and a tow strap is only useful if you are riding in a group. (You should also know how to use it and recognize its use may be illegal on the road.) Some bikes can be propped up on the right side by a length of pipe, which is helpful in some situations. That pipe can also serve as an extension for a wrench or a lever.

The supplies are pretty obvious, though you may have some problem fasteners or other parts that you want to include in addition to a standard selection of nuts, bolts and screws. You should also know what you need to do to reach your fuses in the dark (God help you if you have a Suzuki 1500). I suggest carrying an instrument bulb, a taillight bulb and -- if applicable -- a headlight bulb. A turn signal bulb can be obtained at most gas stations and is less urgent than a taillight bulb. An ideal place to stash bulbs, especially for the headlight, is inside the headlight shell. Extra fuses have also been important in my experience, since the extras supplied with the bike usually just serve to prove you didn't fix the electrical problem on your first attempt.

Carry chain-care equipment if you have a chain. Remember that many bikes have press-in master links, which require an additional tool. Be sure the master link fits your chain.

If you cling to the belief that motorcycle-specific oils are just a conspiracy to separate you from extra money every time you buy oil, there is no sense in carrying a container of oil. But if you are using the right oil and your engine tends to consume a lot, having a bit extra is worthwhile.

Maps of the riding area are always practical, and a compass can help you navigate. I also get a lot of use from the weather-band radio I bought for less than \$20 at Radio Shack (more AA batteries).

Finally, bungee cords and the bungee net I use to provide extra security for the tailbag (I had a different brand tailbag pull loose from its straps several years ago, stick in the rear wheel, and launch me.) are handy for providing a home for clothes I shed, things I acquire along the way, or overflow from other riders' bikes.

Because my bag contains supplies to serve a variety of bikes, it is fairly heavy -- typically more than 20 pounds. But the gear needed for one bike can weigh significantly less if you are selective. Since I often ride with large groups of bikes, the Magic Bag gets called on regularly. A single rider might go all season without ever opening it, even if he rides frequently. But there is peace of mind in knowing that if you have a problem, the solution is probably in the bag.

## **POCKETS AND WALLET**

- Change for phone booth
- Credit cards
- Small pocketknife/flashlight combination

## **TAILBAG**

- Face shields stored in socks
- Small can of Protect All or Pledge
- Clean rags
- Water bottle(s)
- Spare gloves
- Rainsuit
- First-aid kit
- Bicycle strobe light

## **Tools**

- Crescent wrench
- Small locking pliers
- Ratchet and appropriate sockets
- Sears box wrenches
- Allen wrench set
- Tire repair kit(s) with inflator
- Jumper cables
- Waterless hand cleaner
- (Impact driver)
- (Tow strap)
- (Pipe as extension and stand)

## **Parts and Supplies**

- Duct tape
- Nuts and bolts
- Six feet of electrical wire
- Four to six feet of baling wire
- Cotter pins
- Bulbs
- Spare fuses
- Tire sealant
- (Master link)
- (Chain lube)
- (Spark plugs)
- (Small container of oil)

## **Miscellaneous**

- Motorcycle Cruiser cap
- Lighter or heavier gloves
- Weather-band radio
- Local and state maps
- Compass
- Bike lock
- Bungee cords

## **FANNY PACK**

- Cellular phone
- Organizer with phone numbers
- Waterproof Mitylite flashlight
- Spare batteries for all of the above
- Small bottle of solution for face shield cleaning
- Craftsman pocket screwdriver
- Pen and paper
- Sunglasses
- Whistle
- Glasses
- Earplugs
- Multi-tool
- Tire gauge
- Spare bike key
- Cable ties
- Bandanna
- Lip balm
- Contact lens supplies
- Small bottle of sunscreen
- Hand-cleaner wipes
- (Camera and spare battery)